

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

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1. (currently amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:
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- a liquid-pervious surface layer,
 - a liquid-impervious surface layer, and
 - an absorbent body enclosed between the two surface layers,
- wherein the article further exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,
- wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer within the wetting region is ~~constituted~~ consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, at least at the surface of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to be facing the user during use so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, and that all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface ~~are constituted~~ consist of a hydrophobic material, and
- wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body.

2. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the article exhibits a hump, projecting from the liquid-pervious surface layer, wherein the location of the hump on the article at least partially coincides with the wetting region.

3. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of hydrophilic, absorbent fibers including cellulose fibers, cotton, rayon, jute, or peat moss.

4. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of hydrophilic, absorbent foam material, including polyurethane foam, or cellulose foam.

5. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of hydrophobic fibers including polypropylene fibers, polyethylene fibers, polyester fibers, or hydrophobic bi-component fibers.

6. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of a hydrophobic foam material including polyethylene foam.

7. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer comprises a laminate of a first liquid-pervious, hydrophobic material layer arranged closest to the absorbent body, and a second liquid-pervious, hydrophilic absorbent material layer, of substantially a same extension as the wetting region of the article, arranged outside the first material layer and intended to bear on the body of the user in the wetting region during use.

21 8. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer comprises a laminate of the first liquid-pervious, hydrophobic material layer, and a second liquid-pervious, hydrophilic absorbent material layer arranged closest to the absorbent body, inside the first material layer, wherein the hydrophobic material layer exhibits an opening, of substantially the same extension as the wetting region of the article, through which the hydrophilic layer is exposed.

9.  (cancelled)

10. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer is constituted of a hydrophilic material which has been rendered hydrophobic.

 11-12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the article comprises a shaping member which, by means of influence from forces which the article is subjected to during use, has an ability to bring the wetting region into contact with the mucous membranes of the user.

14. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member is comprising compressions or folding notches.

15. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member comprises an insert.

16. (currently amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid impervious layer, and a liquid pervious layer, the liquid pervious layer constituting both a hydrophobic material and a hydrophilic absorbent material, wherein the hydrophilic absorbent material forms a wetting region of the liquid pervious layer that is a region that is intended to be first wetted by body fluid and that consists of the hydrophilic absorbent material and all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious layer ~~are~~ consist of hydrophobic material, the absorbent body being enclosed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region,

wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body.

K1 17. (previously presented) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious surface layer,

a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body enclosed between the two surface layers,

wherein the article further exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer within the wetting region is ~~constituted~~ consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, at least at the surface of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended

to be facing the user during use so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, and that all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer ~~are constituted~~ consist of a hydrophobic material, and wherein at least a portion of the remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer extend over the absorbent body.

20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid impervious layer, and a liquid pervious layer, the liquid pervious layer constituting both a hydrophobic material and a hydrophilic absorbent material, where the hydrophilic absorbent material forms a wetting region of the liquid pervious layer that is region that is intended to be first wetted by body fluid and that consists of hydrophilic absorbent material and all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious layer are consist of hydrophobic material, the absorbent body being enclosed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retained in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region, wherein at least a portion of the remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer extend over the absorbent body.

23. (previously presented) The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

25. (previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, a panty-line, or incontinence protector.

27. (currently amended) The absorbent article according to claim 4 2, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes ~~only~~ of the user.

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 4 ~~6~~ 31, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes ~~only~~ of the user.

29. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 49 32, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes ~~only~~ of the user.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 22 33, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes ~~only~~ of the user.

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31. (new) The method of claim 16, wherein the article exhibits a hump, projecting from the liquid-pervious surface layer, wherein the location of the hump on the article at least partially coincides with the wetting region.

32. (new) The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the article exhibits a hump, projecting from the liquid-pervious surface layer, wherein the location of the hump on the article at least partially coincides with the wetting region.

33. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein the article exhibits a hump, projecting from the liquid-pervious surface layer, wherein the location of the hump on the article at least partially coincides with the wetting region.
